A Call to our Youth

by

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Our millions are on the march to build up India whose people had been sleeping for well nigh two hundred years, until we got our Independence in August 1947. These two hundred years of slumber brought about by foreign rule had kept suppressed our spirit of selfless service to ourselves as a nation to bring up our country to the level of other big free countries whose people have enjoyed and continue to enjoy a life of plenty and prosperity. Inthe last seventeen years of our Independence, we have had nation building plans which have produced results good, but not as good as they should have been had everyone of us, in this beloved land of ours, given our very best in our service as Indians at all times. Alas we did not - not all of us. I know Rome was not built in a day, neither was it humanly possible to have produced plenty and prosperity to all the millions in these last seventeen years, but had we given our sweat in gallons and our blood if it was necessary in our nation building work, instead of demanding our 'pound of flesh' from the government we have put in power the results of these plans could have been much more impressive. With the gifts of God, given us in abundance, such as vast areas of land, water and a wealth of man power, is it not a shame to each one of us that we should still go abegging for our food from outside our own land. Food is one of the, if not the, most essential and vital requirements of our millions. On a full stomach and with the glory we possess of the heritage of our ancient culture and philosophy, if only we lived upto it, we can build up our country more rapidly, saving ourselves the humiliation of having to go about the world asking for food and asking for money. I know no young country, - young in the sense of political freedom, can build without foreign financial and other aids in the early stages of its freedom, but we could have slowed down considerably this begging had all the plans of our government been properly co-ordinated and implemented by those entrusted to do so with scrupulous honesty - integrity--energy and determination - and had we as a united people given our best with no thought for rest and comfort regardingthese plans as much as ours as they were of the government.

Who are the people, who can help produce the food we want. It is the farmer - the peasant - the villager. They are the real 'Back-Bone' of our country. Of these we have nearly 80 per cent of our vast population. They need honest, sound and selfless guidance and leadership for the fulfilment of their duty to the nation, which is to step up agricultural products in sufficient quantities to stop food imports and so save our much needed foreign exchange. Our farmers are a simple folk. They are, men and women real gentlemen and ladies. It is in this context that I make this appeal to you, our youth, the precious gems of our land to make the farmer gain conscience of the fact what a very very important cog he is in the country's wheel of progress and prosperity.

You, our youth, are the leaders of tomorrow. On your labours of today, depend the fruits the country will reap in theyears to come. You know we have a well thought out, perhaps a trifle ambitious, Fourth Five Year Plan in the offing. This plan envisages to provide for our masses, an increasingly better standard of living, to give them a life of dignity and self-respect, and to raise their per-capital income. It is here where

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I know there is an urban call for bright young men to work in the factories, scientific research institutes, offices, services and so on, but the rural call is a much greater one, in this country of ours which has been essentially an agricultural land. Industry, small-scale, medium-scale and large-scale, are all very essential of course, but food is even more essential. The millions of our rural population have yet to be shown, the ways of life and work as practised by peoples of prosperous countries. You can show them these. Now what are the essential 'requisites' necessary in them to enable them to become more effective and useful cogs in the huge big 'Nation Building Wheel'. To my mind they are:-

1) Good health (2) Discipline and character (3) Selflessness and loyal voluntary co-operation with each other (4) Sense of duty (5) Value of time (6) Sanitation and hygiene (7) Sense of civic duties (8) Simple Literacy (9) Economy in all its aspects, to get the best value from their money (10) Modern methods of farming which include, besides growing cereals of all kinds, adequate knowledge of animal husbandry, poultry keeping, growing vegetables and fruits, fishery, bee-keeping and so on. (11) Self-help (12) and this is most important, Family Planning to regulate the size of the family to be in keeping with the 'length of the purse' - and thus put a curb on the alrming growth of India's population which is today five to seven million a year. Family Planning must receive top priority in all our nation-building projects.

Such of you who have been blessed with intelligence, commonsense and physical fitness, can play a very important part in inculcating all these'requisites' in our village folk. I do not wish to give you here any elaborate programme on how you could do this, because an attempt to do so would involve writing volumes on this work. This is not the aim of this article. The article is mainly to give you a rough outline, in its skeleton form, of what there is to be done to build up our Rural India, which is the real 'Gold Mine' of our country.

In this wor, if you are a student, please do not subordinate your studies to it. Studies come first. Your main job in life as a student, is to acquire knowledge to broaden your mental outlook and vitalise your inner spirit to become a good citizen of the land, as you grow up. In your spare time you do this work of educating 'farmer'. However, you students must now, make plans, carefully thought out plans. Do not make them too elaborate nor too ambitious. Keep them simple Do not take on too many subjects at the same time. Get together soon, and set about to plan on how to participate in this glorious adventure in our nation building work which is still in its embryonic stage.

For goodness sake, when you get about this work, please do not go with an air of superiority, looking down on the villagers in a patronising and condescending manner. Do not give them the impression that you want to show off that you are an intelectual superior while they are just poor worms with no brains at

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all. If you do this, you had better pack up and not waste their time nor yours in this great work of Rural Reconstruction. Go to them with modesty and humility. Do not indulge in mere verbiage, but roll up your sleeves and pull up your socks and do the work yourself, the work which you ask them to do. Show them that you are a real practical guide and philosopher, and not just a 'Waffler' preaching platitudes. Remember our village folk who may not be blessed with any academic wealth, are blessed by God with a great deal of sound commonsense. They are very good judges of what is good and what is bad, of who is an honest man and who a hypocrite. You cannot deceive them. They respect gentlemen and will value their advice because they are themselves gentlemen.

As I have often said, I envy you for being young and still in the dawn of your life, with the morning, noon, evening and night yet to follow. With me, I have only the night left to follow. You have endless opportunities to help in this 'Rural Reconstruction'. Go ahead, get cracking. Do not waste an instant's time on useless pursuits, on just meadering about town, frequently cinema houses andeating places. No more strikes please. You have a sacred duty to our country and to yourselves and to our future generations. I have infifite faith in you. I know you will do big things if only you go about with one thought in your minds, and that is to render service to our land as Indians at all times, imbued with a high sense of moral integrity, honesty, self-lessness and sense of duty, giving your best to the other man regardless of how irksome and inconvenient that service may be to you personally. Give all your spare time for this work. Now is NOT the time to rest and idle.

In the villages, you can organise classes foradults and young people to teach them to read andwrite their own language, simple Hindi (to non-Hindi speakers) and simple - one of the other Indian languages to (Hindi speakers) and simple-English to all mainly for conversational purposes. Teach them how to keep simple family accounts. You can organise short drill classes for adults and young people, and make them march about smartly as men and women. This need not cost you any money. In all this work you do, please do not overdo anything. Do not take up all their time for your work alone. Your owrk is only a tiny part of a bigger whole. You must have a thorough knowledge of what you are going to tell them before you go to them.

Finally, I make this fervent appeal to all the Students' Unions in our land, especially to the All India Youth League. Please get down immediately, to preparing a plan which I will call:-

"The All India Youth Plan for Rural Reconstruction and Development during the Five Year Plans".

Form a small Committee of students/non-students, representatives from each State to discuss this matter and meet at Delhi. I say Delhi because here are the 'Planners' whom you can get to address you to indicate to you in what shape and form you can help. Then make your plan for 'Operation Rural Reconstruction' - and send it to every single Students/Youth Unions in the country to implement. Let there be no piecemeal and isolated efforts in this respect. There should be planned supervision of the work being done. Contact the Government Planning Bodies in your own States and ask them to tell you what you can do to help.

It is only when you go about this work planning in this manner can you with a clear conscience feel you are serving India well.

Our Country's 'BUGLE CALL' to you is:

"Wake up our Youth and act as Indians to make 'Rural Reconstruction' a thundering success during the Fourth Five Year Plan, keeping only Indianism aloft in this glorious work, as your inspiration to serve!!

Be up and at it, and help to achieve economic prosperity to our people which will bring in its wake national unity and therefore national strength."

God bless you, our dear youth.

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